



JUST A GUY IN THE PEW
THE NARROW ROAD.

MARCH 2021



THE NARROW ROAD

THE EVERYDAY GUIDE FOR THE EVERYDAY GUY

**In loving memory of Bill Platten.
A leader, a mentor, a friend**

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WELCOME

Brothers in Christ,

I am so excited to finally deliver this resource to you. As I look back over the years at what God has had us doing at *Just a Guy in the Pew*, it has become obvious that His goal for our ministry is to help men become virtuous. Jesus didn't ask us to be merely "good" men, no He called us to be great men. In order for this to happen we need to leave vice and selfishness behind and trade it in for virtue and selflessness. That is what will help us achieve the goal that Christ has for us all. That goal is holiness. In the words of St. Gregory of Nyssa, "The goal of a virtuous life is to become like God." What is God? He is holy and that's what we should hope to become as well.

The *Catechism* defines virtue in this way: "A virtue is an habitual and firm disposition to do the good. It allows the person not only to perform good acts, but to give the best of himself. The virtuous person tends toward the good with all his sensory and spiritual powers; he pursues the good and chooses it in concrete actions." (CCC1803) Did you catch that? It says in order to be virtuous we need a habitual and firm disposition. This is where I think most men struggle. Most of us desire to do good. We desire to BE good. The problem is we don't have a system in place to form the necessary habits that shore up our will. Almost every man I have worked with over the years falls prey to this. We have the intention of being virtuous but the road to hell is paved with good intentions as they say. As men we need structure and accountability to help us practice and live out virtue in our lives. Put pieces of wood for building a desk in front of a guy without directions and tools and the wood will soon be pushed to the side with a promise of getting to it later. Put that same wood in front of a guy with directions and a screw gun and he will build it in an hour. You see, the desire is there, we just need good directions.

That is what I hope these books can be for you every month. In them, you will be able to practice a singular virtue over 30 days in the different relationships of your life. This will help you dial your focus in on one virtue each month and will help keep you from feeling overwhelmed. Feeling overwhelmed is what makes most guys put something down. That's why we have made each day as simple as possible for you. We have even included the daily Gospel reading for you to read and reflect on what God is sharing with you personally that day. That in itself will help transform your life.

You also will have the opportunity to list out the ways in which you have practiced that month's particular virtue in the four different relationships in your life. Those are your relationship with God, your relationship with your spouse, your relationship with your children, and your relationship with your neighbor. These are the places

God wants us to grow in virtue. He uses the very people He puts in front of us each day as opportunities to grow in virtue and holiness. If you are not married and do not have children, use those two weeks to continue to grow your relationship with God and your neighbor while praying for your future spouse and children.

The last piece we have included is the Opportunity for Grace Chart. This is not a commitment sheet, but is exactly what it is called. It's an opportunity for grace. It is a list made up of simple yet powerful practices you can begin to put into place in your life. These are opportunities you can seek out throughout the month to receive God's grace or pass it along to your family or others. Most guys beat themselves up for what they don't do. This is an opportunity to shine light on the progress you are making each week in your spiritual life. It's a chance to see the positive instead of the negative.

It is my hope and prayer that you will find this simple yet powerful tool helpful. I hope that you will use this book each day to help continue on the path to holiness. If your goal is to be the man that God created you to be, then this will get you going in the right direction. I look forward to walking this journey towards becoming virtuous men beside you.

**In Christ,
John**

OPPORTUNITIES FOR GRACE

DAY	MORNING PRAYER	THE NARROW ROAD	DAILY MASS	CONFESSION	ADORATION	TIME WITH WIFE	TIME WITH KIDS	NIGHT PRAYER/ EXAMEN	SUNDAY MASS
1									
2									
3									
4									
5									
6									
7									
8									
9									
10									
11									
12									
13									
14									
15									

DAY	MORNING PRAYER	THE NARROW ROAD	DAILY MASS	CONFESSION	ADORATION	TIME WITH WIFE	TIME WITH KIDS	NIGHT PRAYER/ EXAMEN	SUNDAY MASS
16									
17									
18									
19									
20									
21									
22									
23									
24									
25									
26									
27									
28									
29									
30									
31									

THE VIRTUE OF CHARITY

My brothers, charity is the theological virtue by which we love God above all things for his own sake, and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God. (CCC 1822) Charity is the highest form of love. St. Paul goes so far as to basically say “if I have not charity I am nothing”, in the thirteenth chapter of his first letter to the Corinthians. Everything we do as men has to begin with love. EVERYTHING. Jesus made love the new commandment in the New Testament when He told us to love our God and love our neighbor. He asks us to do everything in and out of love. That’s exactly why we have to begin this journey towards becoming men of virtue with charity. It is the greatest of all the virtues. St. Paul makes that clear to us again in the same chapter of 1 Corinthians. He says, “So faith, hope, and love remain, but the greatest of these is love”. Every other one of the virtues that we are going to practice together are inspired by and grown from charity.

Learning to practice the virtue of charity in our lives is going to allow us to love better. It will help us grow our relationship with God the Father. It will help us grow into the relationship we all desire to have with our wives and our children. It will help us become more aware of the needs of others, thereby making us the friends and brothers we have always wished to be in our hearts. If we don’t get charity right, the rest of this journey will be meaningless. It will be a house built on sand, to use the words of our Lord. So, over the next month we’re going to spend each week on living charity in our relationships. We’re going to start week one on love of the Father. Then we will follow that with love of our spouse during week two. The third week will focus on love of our children. Finally, we will finish up the month with the love of our neighbor. Each day of each week you will have an opportunity to write down ways in which you practiced charity in those relationships. This will help you to focus more on the virtue and actually put it into practice in your life.

Guys, so many of you have shared with me about how you have tried to find peace and joy in your life through getting what you wanted. The big paycheck, the nice house, and all the other toys the world tells us will make us happy. Those things will never fulfill the longing we have in our hearts. No the only thing that will do that for us is to live with the type charity that Christ calls us to. To turn away from the innate selfishness we all have inside us and to choose to love. Then and only then will we find the joy, peace, and mercy we are all longing for. Those are the fruits of charity. They are the reward of truly learning to love God and others first. In the words of St. Augustine, “ Love itself is the fulfillment of all our works. There is the goal; that is why we run: we run toward it and once we reach it, in it we shall find rest.” I look forward to starting this journey today with each and everyone one of you. Let’s get to it. Together let us learn to be men of great charity.

VIRTUE PLAN FOR THE MONTH

VIRTUE: CHARITY

MOTTO:

I will love the Lord, my God, with all my heart, with all my soul, and with all my mind.
I will love my neighbor as myself.

ROOT SIN:

Selfishness/Greed

WHERE DO I SEE THIS SIN IN MY LIFE?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

PLAN TO FORM CHARITY

WEEK 1: Love of God

WEEK 2: Love of My Wife

WEEK 3: Love of My Children

WEEK 4: Love of My Neighbor

ACT OF CHARITY PRAYER

O my God, I love you above all things, with my whole heart and soul, because you are all good and worthy of all my love. I love my neighbor as myself for the love of you. I forgive all who have hurt me and I ask the forgiveness of all who have injured me.

Amen

WEEK 1 REFLECTION:

LOVE OF THE FATHER

This week we will focus on charity towards God. The *Catechism* says that, “ By charity, we love God above all things. Charity, the form of all virtues, binds everything together in perfect harmony.’ (CCC 1844)” My brothers, there is a reason that the first commandment given to us by God is to love Him. Everything else in our lives ebbs and flows from our love of God. Think about it, when our love for God takes a backseat to everything else, things go south. When we quit praying, reading Scripture, or going to Mass, our relationships suffer and we get into those ruts where nothing seems to go right. It is because our lives were made to center around God. When God takes a backseat, it inhibits everything that makes us who we are. We lose our joy. We give up our peace. It’s kind of like taking the sun out of the universe. The earth would be cast into darkness, it would longer have anything to revolve around, and life would basically be snuffed out. That is what happens to us when we lose sight of our love of God. We begin to feel empty and we try to fill that emptiness with whatever the world, the flesh, and the devil offer us. It is a meaningless and empty quest and it is one I am willing to bet most of us are familiar with.

When we love God well though, everything blossoms. Our lives seem to align. We find joy and happiness in the ordinary. We move from selfishness and the seeking of the fulfillment of our own desires to willing the good of the other. When we love God well, His love flows through us and makes us whole. We begin to fulfill the other part of Christ’s commandment. We begin to love others well. That is what Christ calls us to and it all starts with making God the priority in our lives. If you want to be a better father, husband, and friend then start by being a better son. That’s the key. We were created to love Him and serve Him in this world so we could be with Him in the next. That should be the number one focus of our lives each and every day.

So, how do you show charity towards God? For one, you spend time with Him. Go to an extra Mass this week. Stop by the adoration chapel or the church to spend time in front of Him in the Blessed Sacrament. Spend time with Him in the Word. All of these things will help you to grow your love for God. It is like any other relationship in your life. The more time you give to someone, the fonder the heart grows. It is no different in your relationship with God. Actively choose God this week. Instead of choosing the game or your favorite show on Netflix, put the remote down and give that time to God. Trust me, you and every one around you will be better for it.

You will have an opportunity each day this week to write down the ways in which you have taken time to love God. Take this seriously. Take advantage of the gift He is trying to give you. Then sit back and watch your life transform.

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“Charity is the root of all good works.”

— St. Augustine



SAY THE ACT OF CHARITY PRAYER

GOSPEL

LK 6:36-38 SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

Jesus said to his disciples:

“Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

“Stop judging and you will not be judged. Stop condemning and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven. Give and gifts will be given to you; a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap. For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you.”

WEEK 1: LOVE OF GOD
MARCH 2, 2021

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“It is by the path of love, which is charity, that God draws near to man, and man to God. But where charity is not found, God cannot dwell. If, then, we possess charity, we possess God, for “God is Charity” (1John 4:8)

— **St. Albert the Great**

 **SAY THE ACT OF CHARITY PRAYER**

GOSPEL

MT 23:1-12

Jesus spoke to the crowds and to his disciples, saying, “The scribes and the Pharisees have taken their seat on the chair of Moses. Therefore, do and observe all things whatsoever they tell you, but do not follow their example. For they preach but they do not practice. They tie up heavy burdens hard to carry and lay them on people’s shoulders, but they will not lift a finger to move them. All their works are performed to be seen. They widen their phylacteries and lengthen their tassels. They love places of honor at banquets, seats of honor in synagogues, greetings in marketplaces, and the salutation ‘Rabbi.’ As for you, do not be called ‘Rabbi.’ You have but one teacher, and you are all brothers. Call no one on earth your father; you have but one Father in heaven. Do not be called ‘Master’; you have but one master, the Christ. The greatest among you must be your servant. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled; but whoever humbles himself will be exalted.”

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“Charity is the form, mover, mother and root of all the virtues.”

— **St. Thomas Aquinas**

 **SAY THE ACT OF CHARITY PRAYER**

GOSPEL

MT 20:17-28

As Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the Twelve disciples aside by themselves, and said to them on the way, “Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death, and hand him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and scourged and crucified, and he will be raised on the third day.”

Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee approached Jesus with her sons and did him homage, wishing to ask him for something. He said to her, “What do you wish?” She answered him, “Command that these two sons of mine sit, one at your right and the other at your left, in your kingdom.” Jesus said in reply, “You do not know what you are asking. Can you drink the chalice that I am going to drink?” They said to him, “We can.” He replied, “My chalice you will indeed drink, but to sit at my right and at my left, this is not mine to give but is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father.” When the ten heard this, they became indignant at the two brothers. But Jesus summoned them and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and the great ones make their authority over them felt. But it shall not be so among you. Rather, whoever wishes to be great among you shall be your servant; whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave. Just so, the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“To fall in love with God is the greatest romance: to seek Him the greatest adventure; to find him, the greatest human achievement.”

— St. Augustine

 SAY THE ACT OF CHARITY PRAYER

GOSPEL

LK 16:19-31

Jesus said to the Pharisees: “There was a rich man who dressed in purple garments and fine linen and dined sumptuously each day. And lying at his door was a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who would gladly have eaten his fill of the scraps that fell from the rich man’s table. Dogs even used to come and lick his sores. When the poor man died, he was carried away by angels to the bosom of Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried, and from the netherworld, where he was in torment, he raised his eyes and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side. And he cried out, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me. Send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am suffering torment in these flames.’ Abraham replied, ‘My child, remember that you received what was good during your lifetime while Lazarus likewise received what was bad; but now he is comforted here, whereas you are tormented. Moreover, between us and you a great chasm is established to prevent anyone from crossing who might wish to go from our side to yours or from your side to ours.’ He said, ‘Then I beg you, father, send him to my father’s house, for I have five brothers, so that he may warn them, lest they too come to this place of torment.’ But Abraham replied, ‘They have Moses and the prophets. Let them listen to them.’ He said, ‘Oh no, father Abraham, but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.’ Then Abraham said, ‘If they will not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone should rise from the dead.’”

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“Charity is the sweet and holy bond which links the soul with its Creator: it binds God with man and man with God.”

— St. Catherine of Siena



GOSPEL

MT 21:33-43, 45-46

Jesus said to the chief priests and the elders of the people: “Hear another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a hedge around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a tower. Then he leased it to tenants and went on a journey. When vintage time drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants to obtain his produce. But the tenants seized the servants and one they beat, another they killed, and a third they stoned. Again he sent other servants, more numerous than the first ones, but they treated them in the same way. Finally, he sent his son to them, thinking, ‘They will respect my son.’ But when the tenants saw the son, they said to one another, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and acquire his inheritance.’ They seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. What will the owner of the vineyard do to those tenants when he comes?” They answered him, “He will put those wretched men to a wretched death and lease his vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the proper times.” Jesus said to them, “Did you never read in the Scriptures: *‘The stone that the builders rejected / has become the cornerstone; / by the Lord has this been done, / and it is wonderful in our eyes?’* Therefore, I say to you, the Kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that will produce its fruit.” When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they knew that he was speaking about them. And although they were attempting to arrest him, they feared the crowds, for they regarded him as a prophet.

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“Charity is that with which no man is lost and without which no man is saved”

— **St. Robert Bellarmine**

 **SAY THE ACT OF CHARITY PRAYER**

GOSPEL

LK 16:19-31

Tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to listen to Jesus, but the Pharisees and scribes began to complain, saying, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.” So to them Jesus addressed this parable. “A man had two sons, and the younger son said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of your estate that should come to me.’ So the father divided the property between them. After a few days, the younger son collected all his belongings and set off to a distant country where he squandered his inheritance on a life of dissipation. When he had freely spent everything, a severe famine struck that country, and he found himself in dire need. So he hired himself out to one of the local citizens who sent him to his farm to tend the swine. And he longed to eat his fill of the pods on which the swine fed, but nobody gave him any. Coming to his senses he thought, ‘How many of my father’s hired workers have more than enough food to eat, but here am I, dying from hunger. I shall get up and go to my father and I shall say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as you would treat one of your hired workers.”’ So he got up and went back to his father. While he was still a long way off, his father caught sight of him, and was filled with compassion. He ran to his son, embraced him and kissed him. His son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your son.’ But his father ordered his servants, ‘Quickly, bring the finest robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Take the fattened calf and slaughter it. Then let us celebrate with a feast, because this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found.’ Then the celebration began. Now the

older son had been out in the field and, on his way back, as he neared the house, he heard the sound of music and dancing. He called one of the servants and asked what this might mean. The servant said to him, 'Your brother has returned and your father has slaughtered the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.' He became angry, and when he refused to enter the house, his father came out and pleaded with him. He said to his father in reply, 'Look, all these years I served you and not once did I disobey your orders; yet you never gave me even a young goat to feast on with my friends. But when your son returns who swallowed up your property with prostitutes, for him you slaughter the fattened calf.' He said to him, 'My son, you are here with me always; everything I have is yours. But now we must celebrate and rejoice, because your brother was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.'"

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO YOU IN THIS GOSPEL?

ACTS OF CHARITY

HOW HAVE I SHOWN MY LOVE FOR GOD TODAY?

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“The measure of charity may be taken from the want of desires. As desires diminish in the soul, charity increases in it; and when it no longer feels any desire, then it possesses perfect charity.

— **St. Catherine of Siena**

 **SAY THE ACT OF CHARITY PRAYER**

GOSPEL

JN 2:13-25 THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

Since the Passover of the Jews was near, Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

He found in the temple area those who sold oxen, sheep, and doves, as well as the money changers seated there. He made a whip out of cords and drove them all out of the temple area, with the sheep and oxen, and spilled the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables, and to those who sold doves he said, “Take these out of here, and stop making my Father’s house a marketplace.” His disciples recalled the words of Scripture, Zeal for your house will consume me. At this the Jews answered and said to him, “What sign can you show us for doing this?” Jesus answered and said to them, “Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.” The Jews said, “This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and you will raise it up in three days?” But he was speaking about the temple of his body. Therefore, when he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they came to believe the Scripture and the word Jesus had spoken.

While he was in Jerusalem for the feast of Passover, many began to believe in his name when they saw the signs he was doing. But Jesus would not trust himself to them because he knew them all, and did not need anyone to testify about human nature. He himself understood it well.

WEEK 2 REFLECTION:

LOVE OF MY SPOUSE

The most important relationship in our lives, second only to God, is the relationship we have with our spouse. After God, this is the relationship we need to be nourishing and growing on a daily basis. Our wives are such a tremendous gift from the Father. The gift and sign of married love is in fact the way the Father chose to show His love to the world. It mimics the love and design of the Holy Trinity. God loved the Son so much that they beget another in the Holy Spirit. The same is reflected in our relationship with our wives. We love each other so much that there becomes another. Our heavenly Father allows us to partake in the creative process and it allows life to flow. What an amazing thing that is to think about.

The problem though is that over time we can begin to take our wives for granted. After a number of years go by, the relationship can begin to change if we let it. I have spoken with so many men, including myself, that have simply “been busy doing life”, raising kids and focusing so much on providing, that they begin to take their relationship with their wives for granted. Pretty soon they find themselves more often than not with more of a roommate than a wife. They become like two ships passing in the night as they race to accommodate everything the kids have going on while trying to balance their own work schedules. I cannot tell you how many men I have talked to that are on the verge of divorce when their youngest child reaches 18. Once the kids are gone and they look up, they don’t know each other anymore and realize it more than ever. This is a terrible place many men find themselves in. That is why we need to start learning how to love our wives better. We need to make them a priority so that we leave no doubt in their mind how we feel about them and what they mean to us.

St. Paul tells us, “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church and handed himself over for her.” That is exactly how we need to love. We need to learn to sacrifice. We need to learn to put our own selfish wants and needs aside and begin to look to hers. Our wives were given to us as a gift from God to protect, love, and serve. We can not let them take a backseat to other things in our lives. That is what this week is all about. If we are going to be men of charity, then we have to learn to love our wives better.

You can start by doing simple things. Look around this week for things that need to be done around the house. Do a load of laundry, empty the dishwasher, offer to pick up the kids from their activities. Don’t wait for her to ask you. Volunteer. Be proactive. Take a little time each night to put down your phone or turn off the game and ask her about her day. Really listen and give her your full attention. Remember how much she meant to you when you were first dating and in your first years of marriage. Keep that close to your heart. Think about designating a date night each week. Even if it is just going for a walk or a quick bite. Let your wife be the singular focus of your time and attention in some way. Honor her in the way she deserves. Write down the ways in which you have honored her this week so you can make it a habit. I promise you it will be time well spent.

**If you are not married and do not have children, use this week to continue to grow your relationship with God and your neighbor while praying for your future spouse and children.*

WEEK 2: LOVE OF SPOUSE
MARCH 8, 2021

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“If we die to self charity comes alive”

— **Venerable Fulton Sheen**

 **SAY THE ACT OF CHARITY PRAYER**

GOSPEL

LK 4:24-30

Jesus said to the people in the synagogue at Nazareth: “Amen, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own native place. Indeed, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah when the sky was closed for three and a half years and a severe famine spread over the entire land. It was to none of these that Elijah was sent, but only to a widow in Zarephath in the land of Sidon. Again, there were many lepers in Israel during the time of Elisha the prophet; yet not one of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian.” When the people in the synagogue heard this, they were all filled with fury. They rose up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town had been built, to hurl him down headlong. But he passed through the midst of them and went away.

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“Let us practice charity. Let us not forget to make an offer of our actions everyday, every moment, doing everything for love sake.”

— **St. Giuseppe Moscati**

 **SAY THE ACT OF CHARITY PRAYER**

GOSPEL

LK 4:24-30

Peter approached Jesus and asked him, “Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often must I forgive him? As many as seven times?” Jesus answered, “I say to you, not seven times but seventy-seven times. That is why the Kingdom of heaven may be likened to a king who decided to settle accounts with his servants. When he began the accounting, a debtor was brought before him who owed him a huge amount. Since he had no way of paying it back, his master ordered him to be sold, along with his wife, his children, and all his property, in payment of the debt. At that, the servant fell down, did him homage, and said, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay you back in full.’ Moved with compassion the master of that servant let him go and forgave him the loan. When that servant had left, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a much smaller amount. He seized him and started to choke him, demanding, ‘Pay back what you owe.’ Falling to his knees, his fellow servant begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.’ But he refused. Instead, he had him put in prison until he paid back the debt. Now when his fellow servants saw what had happened, they were deeply disturbed, and went to their master and reported the whole affair. His master summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you your entire debt because you begged me to. Should you not have had pity on your fellow servant, as I had pity on you?’ then in anger his master handed him over to the torturers until he should pay back the whole debt. So will my heavenly Father do to you, unless each of you forgives your brother from your heart.”

WEEK 2: LOVE OF SPOUSE
MARCH 10, 2021

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“Love is never something ready-made, something merely ‘given’ to man and woman; it is always at the same time a ‘task’ which they are set. Love should be seen as something which in a sense never ‘is’ but is always only ‘becoming’, and what it becomes depends upon the contribution of both persons and the depth of their commitment.”

— **St. Pope John Paul II**

 **SAY THE ACT OF CHARITY PRAYER**

GOSPEL

MT 5:17-19

Jesus said to his disciples: “Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have come not to abolish but to fulfill. Amen, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or the smallest part of a letter will pass from the law, until all things have taken place. Therefore, whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do so will be called least in the Kingdom of heaven. But whoever obeys and teaches these commandments will be called greatest in the Kingdom of heaven.”

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“The love of husband and wife is the force that welds society together”

— **St. John Chrysostom**

 **SAY THE ACT OF CHARITY PRAYER**

GOSPEL

LK 11:14-23

Jesus was driving out a demon that was mute, and when the demon had gone out, the mute man spoke and the crowds were amazed. Some of them said, “By the power of Beelzebul, the prince of demons, he drives out demons.” Others, to test him, asked him for a sign from heaven. But he knew their thoughts and said to them, “Every kingdom divided against itself will be laid waste and house will fall against house. And if Satan is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? For you say that it is by Beelzebul that I drive out demons. If I, then, drive out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your own people drive them out? Therefore they will be your judges. But if it is by the finger of God that I drive out demons, then the Kingdom of God has come upon you. When a strong man fully armed guards his palace, his possessions are safe. But when one stronger than he attacks and overcomes him, he takes away the armor on which he relied and distributes the spoils. Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.”

WEEK 2: LOVE OF SPOUSE
MARCH 12, 2021

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

"Husbands are called to love God primarily through their wives. Your wife is the sacrament of Christ to you. You are the sacrament of Christ to your wife."

— St. John Chrysostom

 SAY THE ACT OF CHARITY PRAYER

GOSPEL

MK 12:28-34

One of the scribes came to Jesus and asked him, "Which is the first of all the commandments?" Jesus replied, "The first is this: *Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is Lord alone! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.* The second is this: *You shall love your neighbor as yourself.* There is no other commandment greater than these." The scribe said to him, "Well said, teacher. You are right in saying, *He is One and there is no other than he. And to love him with all your heart, with all your understanding, with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself* is worth more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices." And when Jesus saw that he answered with understanding, he said to him, "You are not far from the Kingdom of God." And no one dared to ask him any more questions.

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for her”

— Ephesians 5:25

 SAY THE ACT OF CHARITY PRAYER

GOSPEL

LK 18:9-14

Jesus addressed this parable to those who were convinced of their own righteousness and despised everyone else. “Two people went up to the temple area to pray; one was a Pharisee and the other was a tax collector. The Pharisee took up his position and spoke this prayer to himself, ‘O God, I thank you that I am not like the rest of humanity — greedy, dishonest, adulterous — or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week, and I pay tithes on my whole income.’ But the tax collector stood off at a distance and would not even raise his eyes to heaven but beat his breast and prayed, ‘O God, be merciful to me a sinner.’ I tell you, the latter went home justified, not the former; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“It is the duty of every man to uphold the dignity of every women”

— **St. Pope John Paul II**

 **SAY THE ACT OF CHARITY PRAYER**

GOSPEL

JN 3:14-21 FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

Jesus said to Nicodemus: “Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.”

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him will not be condemned, but whoever does not believe has already been condemned, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the verdict, that the light came into the world, but people preferred darkness to light, because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come toward the light, so that his works might not be exposed. But whoever lives the truth comes to the light, so that his works may be clearly seen as done in God.

WEEK 3 REFLECTION:

LOVE OF MY CHILDREN

There are few things in life that can awaken charity in us as easily as children. To have a child is an indescribable joy and blessing. They teach us to love in a way that other things simply cannot. To be a father is the greatest honor a man can have. To share in a name that belongs to God is a privilege beyond measure. It is a tremendous blessing and one that we need to be great stewards of.

“Fatherhood is a vocation in God’s service to be not held lightly or frivolously, but with the serious determination of serious men.” That’s a quote from Father Lawrence Lovasik. This is true now more than ever. Our children are growing up in a world that is increasingly more violent and troublesome than ever before. Christianity is becoming an afterthought in society and many families. Our kids need to know and understand the love that their father has for them. They need us to be the spiritual leaders of our family and the rock in their life.

For many men, fatherhood has taken a secondary role behind providing for the family. I have spoken with so many guys who struggle to get home at a decent time and to turn off their phone and the world when they do make it home. Many of us have not gotten past our own selfish wants and needs, so the time we are at home is spent pouring a drink or vegging out to a game or a show. I know in my life I have had way too many of those “I’ll hang out with them tomorrow or the next night” moments. The thing is our children are grown and gone before we know it. We only have a precious amount of time to spend with them and to teach them how to love God. One thing you can be sure of, if you don’t have time to teach your kids, the world, the flesh, and the devil sure do and would jump at the chance.

Brothers, this week is all about loving your children. It is time to put other things aside. Work will always be there waiting for you. Your list of to-do’s can take a backseat for this week. Really throw yourself into being present to your kids. You mean so much more to them than you know and simply asking them questions or giving them your undivided attention will have a profound impact on them. Make some memories with them this week they will never forget. Take them out individually for ice cream. Get on the floor and build some Legos or play some Barbie. Heck, take them fishing! I promise you it’s one thing in your life you won’t regret doing. Be the father you’ve always wanted to be.

**If you are not married and do not have children, use this week to continue to grow your relationship with God and your neighbor while praying for your future spouse and children.*

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

"It is not enough to love the children, it is necessary that they are aware they are loved."

— St. John Bosco

 SAY THE ACT OF CHARITY PRAYER

GOSPEL

JN 4:43-54

At that time Jesus left [Samaria] for Galilee. For Jesus himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his native place. When he came into Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him, since they had seen all he had done in Jerusalem at the feast; for they themselves had gone to the feast. Then he returned to Cana in Galilee, where he had made the water wine. Now there was a royal official whose son was ill in Capernaum. When he heard that Jesus had arrived in Galilee from Judea, he went to him and asked him to come down and heal his son, who was near death. Jesus said to him, "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will not believe." The royal official said to him, "Sir, come down before my child dies." Jesus said to him, "You may go; your son will live." The man believed what Jesus said to him and left. While the man was on his way back, his slaves met him and told him that his boy would live. He asked them when he began to recover. They told him, "The fever left him yesterday, about one in the afternoon." The father realized that just at that time Jesus had said to him, "Your son will live," and he and his whole household came to believe. Now this was the second sign Jesus did when he came to Galilee from Judea.

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“Let the children come to me, and do not prevent them; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these”

— **Matthew 19:14**



SAY THE ACT OF CHARITY PRAYER

GOSPEL

JN 4:43-54

There was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is in Jerusalem at the Sheep Gate a pool called in Hebrew Bethesda, with five porticoes. In these lay a large number of ill, blind, lame, and crippled. One man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been ill for a long time, he said to him, “Do you want to be well?” The sick man answered him, “Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; while I am on my way, someone else gets down there before me.” Jesus said to him, “Rise, take up your mat, and walk.” Immediately the man became well, took up his mat, and walked.

Now that day was a sabbath. So the Jews said to the man who was cured, “It is the sabbath, and it is not lawful for you to carry your mat.” He answered them, “The man who made me well told me, ‘Take up your mat and walk.’” They asked him, “Who is the man who told you, ‘Take it up and walk’?” The man who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had slipped away, since there was a crowd there. After this Jesus found him in the temple area and said to him, “Look, you are well; do not sin any more, so that nothing worse may happen to you.” The man went and told the Jews that Jesus was the one who had made him well. Therefore, the Jews began to persecute Jesus because he did this on a sabbath.

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up with the training and instruction of the Lord.”

— Ephesians 6:4

 SAY THE ACT OF CHARITY PRAYER

GOSPEL

JN 5:17-30

Jesus answered the Jews: “My Father is at work until now, so I am at work.” For this reason they tried all the more to kill him, because he not only broke the sabbath but he also called God his own father, making himself equal to God.

Jesus answered and said to them, “Amen, amen, I say to you, the Son cannot do anything on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing; for what he does, the Son will do also. For the Father loves the Son and shows him everything that he himself does, and he will show him greater works than these, so that you may be amazed. For just as the Father raises the dead and gives life, so also does the Son give life to whomever he wishes. Nor does the Father judge anyone, but he has given all judgment to the Son, so that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him. Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes in the one who sent me has eternal life and will not come to condemnation, but has passed from death to life. Amen, amen, I say to you, the hour is coming and is now here when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. For just as the Father has life in himself, so also he gave to the Son the possession of life in himself. And he gave him power to exercise judgment, because he is the Son of Man. Do not be amazed at this, because the hour is coming in which all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and will come out, those who have done good deeds to the resurrection of life, but those who have done wicked deeds to the resurrection of condemnation.

“I cannot do anything on my own; I judge as I hear, and my judgment is just, because I do not seek my own will but the will of the one who sent me.”

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO YOU IN THIS GOSPEL?

ACTS OF CHARITY

HOW HAVE I SHOWN MY LOVE FOR MY CHILDREN TODAY?

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“Each child has a place in God’s Heart from all eternity; Once he or she is conceived, the creator’s eternal dream comes true.”

— Pope Francis



SAY THE ACT OF CHARITY PRAYER

GOSPEL

JN 5:17-30

Jesus said to the Jews: “If I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is not true. But there is another who testifies on my behalf, and I know that the testimony he gives on my behalf is true. You sent emissaries to John, and he testified to the truth. I do not accept human testimony, but I say this so that you may be saved. He was a burning and shining lamp, and for a while you were content to rejoice in his light. But I have testimony greater than John’s. The works that the Father gave me to accomplish, these works that I perform testify on my behalf that the Father has sent me. Moreover, the Father who sent me has testified on my behalf. But you have never heard his voice nor seen his form, and you do not have his word remaining in you, because you do not believe in the one whom he has sent. You search the Scriptures, because you think you have eternal life through them; even they testify on my behalf. But you do not want to come to me to have life.

“I do not accept human praise; moreover, I know that you do not have the love of God in you. I came in the name of my Father, but you do not accept me; yet if another comes in his own name, you will accept him. How can you believe, when you accept praise from one another and do not seek the praise that comes from the only God? Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father: the one who will accuse you is Moses, in whom you have placed your hope. For if you had believed Moses, you would have believed me, because he wrote about me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe my words?”

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO YOU IN THIS GOSPEL?

ACTS OF CHARITY

HOW HAVE I SHOWN MY LOVE FOR MY CHILDREN TODAY?

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“When a child is given to his parents a crown is made for that child in Heaven, and woe to the parents who raise a child without consciousness of that eternal crown.”

— **Venerable Fulton Sheen**

 **SAY THE ACT OF CHARITY PRAYER**

GOSPEL

LK 2:41-51A -OR- MT 1:16, 18-21, 24A THE SOLEMNITY OF ST. JOSEPH

Each year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover, and when he was twelve years old, they went up according to festival custom. After they had completed its days, as they were returning, the boy Jesus remained behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. Thinking that he was in the caravan, they journeyed for a day and looked for him among their relatives and acquaintances, but not finding him, they returned to Jerusalem to look for him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions, and all who heard him were astounded at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him, they were astonished, and his mother said to him, “Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been looking for you with great anxiety.” And he said to them, “Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?” But they did not understand what he said to them. He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them.

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“Whoever receives one child such as this in my name, receives me; and whoever receives me, receives not me but the One who sent me.”

— Mark 9:37

SAY THE ACT OF CHARITY PRAYER

GOSPEL

JN 7:40-53

Some in the crowd who heard these words of Jesus said, “This is truly the Prophet.” Others said, “This is the Christ.” But others said, “The Christ will not come from Galilee, will he? Does not Scripture say that the Christ will be of David’s family and come from Bethlehem, the village where David lived?” So a division occurred in the crowd because of him. Some of them even wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him.

So the guards went to the chief priests and Pharisees, who asked them, “Why did you not bring him?” The guards answered, “Never before has anyone spoken like this man.” So the Pharisees answered them, “Have you also been deceived? Have any of the authorities or the Pharisees believed in him? But this crowd, which does not know the law, is accursed.” Nicodemus, one of their members who had come to him earlier, said to them, “Does our law condemn a man before it first hears him and finds out what he is doing?” They answered and said to him, “You are not from Galilee also, are you? Look and see that no prophet arises from Galilee.”

Then each went to his own house.

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO YOU IN THIS GOSPEL?

ACTS OF CHARITY

HOW HAVE I SHOWN MY LOVE FOR MY CHILDREN TODAY?

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“So faith, hope, love remain, these three; but the greatest of these is love.”

— 1 Corinthians 13:13

 SAY THE ACT OF CHARITY PRAYER

GOSPEL

JN 12:20-33 FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

Some Greeks who had come to worship at the Passover Feast came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, “Sir, we would like to see Jesus.” Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Amen, amen, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains just a grain of wheat; but if it dies, it produces much fruit. Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will preserve it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there also will my servant be. The Father will honor whoever serves me.

“I am troubled now. Yet what should I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? But it was for this purpose that I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name.” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it and will glorify it again.” The crowd there heard it and said it was thunder; but others said, “An angel has spoken to him.” Jesus answered and said, “This voice did not come for my sake but for yours. Now is the time of judgment on this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself.” He said this indicating the kind of death he would die.

WEEK 4 REFLECTION:

LOVE OF MY NEIGHBORS

“This is my commandment: love one another as I love you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” John 15:12. This one is pretty clear cut isn’t? Jesus doesn’t leave any wiggle room that I can see there. He even doubles down on it when he tells us we are to love our enemies. That’s right. Love the people you hate. Put that in your pipe and smoke it. It’s a tall order, but it is one we have to make good on.

We live in a world that is becoming more and more self-centered and selfish by the day. Every commercial on TV is telling you to do whatever you want whenever you want because it’s your right and no one can tell you any different or they are the problem. We are called by Christ to be His light in the world. We are called to be different. When we are charitable to our neighbors we show the world there is a different way. A better way. The funny thing is when you love your neighbor, you are actually as much of a beneficiary of that love as they are. You start to realize that selfishness and self centered pursuits never made you happy and they never would have. You start to realize that true peace and joy come from denying of one’s self and putting the needs of others first. Why do you think you feel so good when you go out of your way to help someone? It’s what we were made for. We were made for community.

Most people don’t have a problem showing love to their own family. To most, it just comes naturally. Loving others outside of our family though, that’s the true test. That’s where the rubber meets the road as Christians. There are so many people in our path everyday that are putting on a fake smile or a mask to hide their problems. The world is more connected than it has ever been before, yet we have more people suffering from loneliness and depression than any other time in history. That is what happens when people begin to be concerned only with their own needs. Charity towards your neighbor is the second commandment Jesus left to us, only behind loving God in importance. This is where the world needs us. This world needs us to be the Christians we are supposed to be. We are Jesus’ hands and feet and it’s time we got to work.

This week is all about doing something for others. Maybe it’s stopping for a few extra minutes to talk to the guy at work everyone avoids. Maybe it’s listening to the homeless person that always asks you for money. Heck, maybe it is just giving a smile and wave to someone who looks like they need it. The point is to get out of that “too busy” mindset and start being a gift to others this week. Ask God to show you ways in which you can be a blessing to others and He will give you more options than you can shake a stick at. I guarantee you, if you surrender and trust where He leads you, you’ll come out the other side a better man, with some of that joy that may have been illuding you. Write it all down everyday and make a habit of putting others first.

WEEK 4: LOVE OF NEIGHBOR
MARCH 22, 2021

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“To love our neighbor in charity is to love God in man”

— St. Francis de Sales

 SAY THE ACT OF CHARITY PRAYER

GOSPEL

JN 8:1-11

Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. But early in the morning he arrived again in the temple area, and all the people started coming to him, and he sat down and taught them. Then the scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery and made her stand in the middle. They said to him, “Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. Now in the law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?” They said this to test him, so that they could have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and began to write on the ground with his finger. But when they continued asking him, he straightened up and said to them, “Let the one among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her. Again he bent down and wrote on the ground. And in response, they went away one by one, beginning with the elders. So he was left alone with the woman before him. Then Jesus straightened up and said to her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” She replied, “No one, sir.” Then Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you. Go, and from now on do not sin any more.”

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“Charity is the cement which binds communities to God and persons to one another.”

— St. Vincent De Paul

 SAY THE ACT OF CHARITY PRAYER

GOSPEL

JN 8:21-30

Jesus said to the Pharisees: “I am going away and you will look for me, but you will die in your sin. Where I am going you cannot come.” So the Jews said, “He is not going to kill himself, is he, because he said, ‘Where I am going you cannot come?’” He said to them, “You belong to what is below, I belong to what is above. You belong to this world, but I do not belong to this world. That is why I told you that you will die in your sins. For if you do not believe that I AM, you will die in your sins.” So they said to him, “Who are you?” Jesus said to them, “What I told you from the beginning. I have much to say about you in condemnation. But the one who sent me is true, and what I heard from him I tell the world.” They did not realize that he was speaking to them of the Father. So Jesus said to them, “When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will realize that I AM, and that I do nothing on my own, but I say only what the Father taught me. The one who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, because I always do what is pleasing to him.” Because he spoke this way, many came to believe in him.

WEEK 4: LOVE OF NEIGHBOR
MARCH 24, 2021

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“Charity may be a very short word, but with its tremendous meaning of pure love, it sums up man’s entire relation to God and to his neighbor.”

— **St. Aelred of Rievaulx**

 **SAY THE ACT OF CHARITY PRAYER**

GOSPEL

JN 8:31-42

Jesus said to those Jews who believed in him, “If you remain in my word, you will truly be my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” They answered him, “We are descendants of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How can you say, ‘You will become free?’” Jesus answered them, “Amen, amen, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin. A slave does not remain in a household forever, but a son always remains. So if the Son frees you, then you will truly be free. I know that you are descendants of Abraham. But you are trying to kill me, because my word has no room among you. I tell you what I have seen in the Father’s presence; then do what you have heard from the Father.”

They answered and said to him, “Our father is Abraham.” Jesus said to them, “If you were Abraham’s children, you would be doing the works of Abraham. But now you are trying to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God; Abraham did not do this. You are doing the works of your father!” So they said to him, “We were not born of fornication. We have one Father, God.” Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and am here; I did not come on my own, but he sent me.”

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“Charity, by which God and neighbor are loved, is the most perfect friendship.”

— **St. Thomas Aquinas**

 **SAY THE ACT OF CHARITY PRAYER**

GOSPEL

LK 1:26-38

The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming to her, he said, “Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you.” But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. Then the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his Kingdom there will be no end.” But Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?” And the angel said to her in reply, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren; for nothing will be impossible for God.” Mary said, “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.” Then the angel departed from her.

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“Let us practice charity. Let us not forget to make an offer of our actions everyday, every moment, doing everything for love sake.”

— **St. Giuseppe Moscati**

 **SAY THE ACT OF CHARITY PRAYER**

GOSPEL

JN 10:31-42

The Jews picked up rocks to stone Jesus. Jesus answered them, “I have shown you many good works from my Father. For which of these are you trying to stone me?” The Jews answered him, “We are not stoning you for a good work but for blasphemy. You, a man, are making yourself God.” Jesus answered them, “Is it not written in your law, ‘I said, ‘You are gods’”? If it calls them gods to whom the word of God came, and Scripture cannot be set aside, can you say that the one whom the Father has consecrated and sent into the world blasphemes because I said, ‘I am the Son of God’? If I do not perform my Father’s works, do not believe me; but if I perform them, even if you do not believe me, believe the works, so that you may realize and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father.” Then they tried again to arrest him; but he escaped from their power.

He went back across the Jordan to the place where John first baptized, and there he remained. Many came to him and said, “John performed no sign, but everything John said about this man was true.” And many there began to believe in him.

WEEK 4: LOVE OF NEIGHBOR

MARCH 27, 2021

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“Love is the most necessary of all virtues. Love in the person who preaches the word of God is like fire in a musket. If a person were to throw a bullet with his hands, he would hardly make a dent in anything; but if the person takes the same bullet and ignites some gunpowder behind it, it can kill. It is much the same with the word of God. If it is spoken by someone who is filled with the fire of charity—the fire of love of God and neighbor—it will work wonders.”

— St. Anthony Mary Claret

SAY THE ACT OF CHARITY PRAYER

GOSPEL

JN 11:45-56

Many of the Jews who had come to Mary and seen what Jesus had done began to believe in him. But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. So the chief priests and the Pharisees convened the Sanhedrin and said, “What are we going to do? This man is performing many signs. If we leave him alone, all will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our land and our nation.” But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, said to them, “You know nothing, nor do you consider that it is better for you that one man should die instead of the people, so that the whole nation may not perish.” He did not say this on his own, but since he was high priest for that year, he prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation, and not only for the nation, but also to gather into one the dispersed children of God. So from that day on they planned to kill him.

So Jesus no longer walked about in public among the Jews, but he left for the region near the desert, to a town called Ephraim, and there he remained with his disciples.

Now the Passover of the Jews was near, and many went up from the country to Jerusalem before Passover to purify themselves. They looked for Jesus and said to one another as they were in the temple area, “What do you think? That he will not come to the feast?”

WEEK 4: LOVE OF NEIGHBOR

MARCH 28, 2021

SAY THE ACT OF CHARITY PRAYER

GOSPEL

MK 14:1—15:47 PALM SUNDAY OF THE LORD'S PASSION

The Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread were to take place in two days' time. So the chief priests and the scribes were seeking a way to arrest him by treachery and put him to death. They said, "Not during the festival, for fear that there may be a riot among the people."

When he was in Bethany reclining at table in the house of Simon the leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of perfumed oil, costly genuine spikenard. She broke the alabaster jar and poured it on his head. There were some who were indignant. "Why has there been this waste of perfumed oil? It could have been sold for more than three hundred days' wages and the money given to the poor." They were infuriated with her. Jesus said, "Let her alone. Why do you make trouble for her? She has done a good thing for me. The poor you will always have with you, and whenever you wish you can do good to them, but you will not always have me. She has done what she could. She has anticipated anointing my body for burial. Amen, I say to you, wherever the gospel is proclaimed to the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her."

Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went off to the chief priests to hand him over to them. When they heard him they were pleased and promised to pay him money. Then he looked for an opportunity to hand him over.

On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, when they sacrificed the Passover lamb, his disciples said to him, "Where do you want us to go and prepare for you to eat the Passover?" He sent two of his disciples and said to them, "Go into the city and a man will meet you, carrying a jar of water. Follow him. Wherever he enters, say to the master of the house, 'The Teacher says, "Where is my guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples?"'" Then he will show you a large upper room furnished and ready. Make the preparations for us there." The disciples then went off, entered the city, and found it just as he had told them; and they prepared the Passover.

When it was evening, he came with the Twelve. And as they reclined at table and were eating, Jesus said, "Amen, I say to you, one of you will betray me, one who is

eating with me." They began to be distressed and to say to him, one by one, "Surely it is not I?" He said to them, "One of the Twelve, the one who dips with me into the dish. For the Son of Man indeed goes, as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed. It would be better for that man if he had never been born."

While they were eating, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, and said, "Take it; this is my body." Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, and they all drank from it. He said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed for many. Amen, I say to you, I shall not drink again the fruit of the vine until the day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God." Then, after singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Then Jesus said to them, "All of you will have your faith shaken, for it is written: I will strike the shepherd and the sheep will be dispersed. But after I have been raised up, I shall go before you to Galilee." Peter said to him, "Even though all should have their faith shaken, mine will not be." Then Jesus said to him, "Amen, I say to you, this very night before the cock crows twice you will deny me three times." But he vehemently replied, "Even though I should have to die with you, I will not deny you." And they all spoke similarly.

Then they came to a place named Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." He took with him Peter, James, and John, and began to be troubled and distressed. Then he said to them, "My soul is sorrowful even to death. Remain here and keep watch." He advanced a little and fell to the ground and prayed that if it were possible the hour might pass by him; he said, "Abba, Father, all things are possible to you. Take this cup away from me, but not what I will but what you will." When he returned he found them asleep. He said to Peter, "Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour? Watch and pray that you may not undergo the test. The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak." Withdrawing again, he prayed, saying the same thing. Then he returned once more and found them asleep, for they could not keep their eyes open and did not know what to answer him. He returned a third time and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? It is enough. The hour has come. Behold, the Son of Man is to be handed over to sinners. Get up, let us go. See, my betrayer is at hand."

Then, while he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived, accompanied by a crowd with swords and clubs who had come from the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders. His betrayer had arranged a signal with them, saying, "The man I shall kiss is the one; arrest him and lead him away securely." He came and immediately went over to him and said, "Rabbi." And he kissed him. At this they laid hands on him and arrested him. One of the bystanders drew his sword, struck the high priest's servant, and cut off his ear. Jesus said to them in reply, "Have you come out as against a robber, with swords and clubs, to seize me? Day after day I was with you teaching in the temple area, yet you did not arrest me; but that the Scriptures may be fulfilled."

And they all left him and fled. Now a young man followed him wearing nothing but a linen cloth about his body. They seized him, but he left the cloth behind and ran off naked.

They led Jesus away to the high priest, and all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes came together. Peter followed him at a distance into the high priest's courtyard and was seated with the guards, warming himself at the fire. The chief priests and the entire Sanhedrin kept trying to obtain testimony against Jesus in order to put him to death, but they found none. Many gave false witness against him, but their testimony did not agree. Some took the stand and testified falsely against him, alleging, "We heard him say, 'I will destroy this temple made with hands and within three days I will build another not made with hands.'" Even so their testimony did not agree. The high priest rose before the assembly and questioned Jesus, saying, "Have you no answer? What are these men testifying against you?" But he was silent and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him and said to him, "Are you the Christ, the son of the Blessed One?" Then Jesus answered, "I am; and / 'you will see the Son of Man / seated at the right hand of the Power / and coming with the clouds of heaven.'" / At that the high priest tore his garments and said, "What further need have we of witnesses? You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?" They all condemned him as deserving to die. Some began to spit on him. They blindfolded him and struck him and said to him, "Prophecy!" And the guards greeted him with blows.

While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the high priest's maids came along. Seeing Peter warming himself, she looked intently at him and said, "You too were with the Nazarene, Jesus." But he denied it saying, "I neither know nor understand what you are talking about." So he went out into the outer court. Then the cock crowed. The maid saw him and began again to say to the bystanders, "This man is one of them." Once again he denied it. A little later the bystanders said to Peter once more, "Surely you are one of them; for you too are a Galilean." He began to curse and to swear, "I do not know this man about whom you are talking." And immediately a cock crowed a second time. Then Peter remembered the word that Jesus had said to him, "Before the cock crows twice you will deny me three times." He broke down and wept.

As soon as morning came, the chief priests with the elders and the scribes, that is, the whole Sanhedrin held a council. They bound Jesus, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate. Pilate questioned him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" He said to him in reply, "You say so." The chief priests accused him of many things. Again Pilate questioned him, "Have you no answer? See how many things they accuse you of." Jesus gave him no further answer, so that Pilate was amazed.

Now on the occasion of the feast he used to release to them one prisoner whom they requested. A man called Barabbas was then in prison along with the rebels who had committed murder in a rebellion. The crowd came forward and began to ask him to

do for them as he was accustomed. Pilate answered, "Do you want me to release to you the king of the Jews?" For he knew that it was out of envy that the chief priests had handed him over. But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have him release Barabbas for them instead. Pilate again said to them in reply, "Then what do you want me to do with the man you call the king of the Jews?" They shouted again, "Crucify him." Pilate said to them, "Why? What evil has he done?" They only shouted the louder, "Crucify him." So Pilate, wishing to satisfy the crowd, released Barabbas to them and, after he had Jesus scourged, handed him over to be crucified.

The soldiers led him away inside the palace, that is, the praetorium, and assembled the whole cohort. They clothed him in purple and, weaving a crown of thorns, placed it on him. They began to salute him with, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and kept striking his head with a reed and spitting upon him. They knelt before him in homage. And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the purple cloak, dressed him in his own clothes, and led him out to crucify him.

They pressed into service a passer-by, Simon, a Cyrenian, who was coming in from the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to carry his cross.

They brought him to the place of Golgotha — which is translated Place of the Skull —, They gave him wine drugged with myrrh, but he did not take it. Then they crucified him and divided his garments by casting lots for them to see what each should take. It was nine o'clock in the morning when they crucified him. The inscription of the charge against him read, "The King of the Jews." With him they crucified two revolutionaries, one on his right and one on his left. Those passing by reviled him, shaking their heads and saying, "Aha! You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself by coming down from the cross." Likewise the chief priests, with the scribes, mocked him among themselves and said, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross that we may see and believe." Those who were crucified with him also kept abusing him.

At noon darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And at three o'clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" which is translated, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Some of the bystanders who heard it said, "Look, he is calling Elijah." One of them ran, soaked a sponge with wine, put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink saying, "Wait, let us see if Elijah comes to take him down." Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last.

Here all kneel and pause for a short time.

The veil of the sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom. When the centurion who stood facing him saw how he breathed his last he said, "Truly this man was the Son of God!" There were also women looking on from a distance. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of the younger James and of Joses, and Salome. These women had followed him when he was in Galilee and ministered to him. There

were also many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem.

When it was already evening, since it was the day of preparation, the day before the sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, a distinguished member of the council, who was himself awaiting the kingdom of God, came and courageously went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate was amazed that he was already dead. He summoned the centurion and asked him if Jesus had already died. And when he learned of it from the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph. Having bought a linen cloth, he took him down, wrapped him in the linen cloth, and laid him in a tomb that had been hewn out of the rock. Then he rolled a stone against the entrance to the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus watched where he was laid.

MARCH 29, 2021

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

— **Leviticus 19:18**

 **SAY THE ACT OF CHARITY PRAYER**

GOSPEL

JN 12:1-11

Six days before Passover Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus was, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. They gave a dinner for him there, and Martha served, while Lazarus was one of those reclining at table with him. Mary took a liter of costly perfumed oil made from genuine aromatic nard and anointed the feet of Jesus and dried them with her hair; the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil. Then Judas the Iscariot, one of his disciples, and the one who would betray him, said, “Why was this oil not sold for three hundred days’ wages and given to the poor?” He said this not because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief and held the money bag and used to steal the contributions. So Jesus said, “Leave her alone. Let her keep this for the day of my burial. You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me.”

The large crowd of the Jews found out that he was there and came, not only because of him, but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. And the chief priests plotted to kill Lazarus too, because many of the Jews were turning away and believing in Jesus because of him.

MARCH 30, 2021

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

“We must love our neighbor as being made in the image of God and as an object of His love.”

— St. Vincent de Paul



SAY THE ACT OF CHARITY PRAYER

GOSPEL

JN 13:21-33, 36-38

Reclining at table with his disciples, Jesus was deeply troubled and testified, “Amen, amen, I say to you, one of you will betray me.” The disciples looked at one another, at a loss as to whom he meant. One of his disciples, the one whom Jesus loved, was reclining at Jesus’ side. So Simon Peter nodded to him to find out whom he meant. He leaned back against Jesus’ chest and said to him, “Master, who is it?” Jesus answered, “It is the one to whom I hand the morsel after I have dipped it.” So he dipped the morsel and took it and handed it to Judas, son of Simon the Iscariot. After Judas took the morsel, Satan entered him. So Jesus said to him, “What you are going to do, do quickly.” Now none of those reclining at table realized why he said this to him. Some thought that since Judas kept the money bag, Jesus had told him, “Buy what we need for the feast,” or to give something to the poor. So Judas took the morsel and left at once. And it was night.

When he had left, Jesus said, “Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself, and he will glorify him at once. My children, I will be with you only a little while longer. You will look for me, and as I told the Jews, ‘Where I go you cannot come,’ so now I say it to you.”

Simon Peter said to him, “Master, where are you going?” Jesus answered him, “Where I am going, you cannot follow me now, though you will follow later.” Peter said to him, “Master, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.” Jesus answered, “Will you lay down your life for me? Amen, amen, I say to you, the cock will not crow before you deny me three times.”

MARCH 31, 2021

THOUGHTS FROM THE CHURCH

What is the mark of love for your neighbor? Not to seek what is for your own benefit, but what is for the benefit of the one loved, both in body and in soul.

— St. Vincent de Paul



SAY THE ACT OF CHARITY PRAYER

GOSPEL

MT 26:14-25

One of the Twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said “What are you willing to give me if I hand him over to you?” They paid him thirty pieces of silver, and from that time on he looked for an opportunity to hand him over. On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples approached Jesus and said, “Where do you want us to prepare for you to eat the Passover?” He said, “Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, ‘The teacher says, My appointed time draws near; in your house I shall celebrate the Passover with my disciples.’” The disciples then did as Jesus had ordered, and prepared the Passover.

When it was evening, he reclined at table with the Twelve. And while they were eating, he said, “Amen, I say to you, one of you will betray me.” Deeply distressed at this, they began to say to him one after another, “Surely it is not I, Lord?” He said in reply, “He who has dipped his hand into the dish with me is the one who will betray me. The Son of Man indeed goes, as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed. It would be better for that man if he had never been born.” Then Judas, his betrayer, said in reply, “Surely it is not I, Rabbi?” He answered, “You have said so.”

LITANY OF HUMILITY

O Jesus! meek and humble of heart,
Hear me.

From the desire of being esteemed,
Deliver me, Jesus.

From the desire of being loved,
Deliver me, Jesus.

From the desire of being extolled,
Deliver me, Jesus.

From the desire of being honored ,
Deliver me, Jesus.

From the desire of being praised,
Deliver me, Jesus.

From the desire of being preferred
to others,
Deliver me, Jesus.

From the desire of being consulted,
Deliver me, Jesus.

From the desire of being approved,
Deliver me, Jesus.

From the fear of being humiliated,
Deliver me, Jesus.

From the fear of being despised,
Deliver me, Jesus.

From the fear of suffering rebukes,
Deliver me, Jesus.

From the fear of being calumniated,
Deliver me, Jesus.

From the fear of being forgotten,
Deliver me, Jesus.

From the fear of being ridiculed,
Deliver me, Jesus.

From the fear of being wronged,
Deliver me, Jesus.

From the fear of being suspected,
Deliver me, Jesus.

That others may be loved more than I,
Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.

That others may be esteemed more than I,
Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.

That, in the opinion of the world, others
may increase and I may decrease,
Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.

That others may be chosen and I set aside,
Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.

That others may be praised and
I unnoticed,

Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.

That others may be preferred to me
in everything,

Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.

That others may become holier than I,
provided that I may become as holy as
I should,

Jesus, grant me the grace to desire it.

THE LITANY OF TRUST

From the belief that I have to earn
Your love,

Deliver me, Jesus.

From the fear that I am unlovable,

Deliver me, Jesus.

From the false security that I have what
it takes,

Deliver me, Jesus.

From the fear that trusting You will leave
me more destitute,

Deliver me, Jesus.

From all suspicion of Your words
and promises,

Deliver me, Jesus.

From the rebellion against childlike
dependency on You,

Deliver me, Jesus.

From refusals and reluctances in
accepting Your will,

Deliver me, Jesus.

From anxiety about the future,

Deliver me, Jesus.

From resentment or excessive
preoccupation with the past,

Deliver me, Jesus.

From restless self-seeking
in the present moment,

Deliver me, Jesus.

From disbelief in Your love and presence,

Deliver me, Jesus.

From the fear of being asked to give
more than I have,

Deliver me, Jesus.

From the belief that my life has no
meaning or worth,

Deliver me, Jesus.

From the fear of what love demands,

Deliver me, Jesus.

From discouragement,

Deliver me, Jesus.

That You are continually holding me
sustaining me, loving me,

Jesus, I trust in you.

That Your love goes deeper than my sins
and failings, and transforms me,

Jesus, I trust in you.

That not knowing what tomorrow brings is
an invitation to lean on You,

Jesus, I trust in you.

That you are with me in my suffering,

Jesus, I trust in you.

That my suffering, united to Your own, will
bear fruit in this life and the next,

Jesus, I trust in you.

That You will not leave me orphan, that You
are present in Your Church,

Jesus, I trust in you.

That Your plan is better than anything else,

Jesus, I trust in you.

That You always hear me and in Your
goodness always respond to me,

Jesus, I trust in you.

That You give me the grace to accept
forgiveness and to forgive others,

Jesus, I trust in you.

That You give me all the strength I need for
what is asked,

Jesus, I trust in you.

That my life is a gift,

Jesus, I trust in you.

That You will teach me to trust You,

Jesus, I trust in you.

That You are my Lord and my God,

Jesus, I trust in you.

That I am Your beloved one,

Jesus, I trust in you.

PRAYER TO SAINT JOSEPH

To you, O blessed Joseph, do we come in our tribulation, and having implored the help of your most holy Spouse, we confidently invoke your patronage also. Through that charity which bound you to the Immaculate Virgin Mother of God and through the paternal love with which you embraced the Child Jesus, we humbly beg you graciously to regard the inheritance which Jesus Christ has purchased by his Blood, and with your power and strength to aid us in our necessities. O most watchful guardian of the Holy Family, defend the chosen children of Jesus Christ; O most loving father, ward off from us every contagion of error and corrupting influence; O our most mighty protector, be kind to us and from heaven assist us in our struggle with the power of darkness. As once you rescued the Child Jesus from deadly peril, so now protect God's Holy Church from the snares of the enemy and from all adversity; shield, too, each one of us by your constant protection, so that, supported by your example and your aid, we may be able to live piously, to die in holiness, and to obtain eternal happiness in heaven. Amen.

A photograph of two men sitting at a wooden table in a cafe. The man on the left is wearing a blue plaid shirt and holding a red mug. The man on the right is wearing a light blue sweater and gesturing with his hands while talking. In the background, there are other people and a sign that says "LOCAL".

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